
Historical Ecology: If the Past Teaches, what does the Future Learn?

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Abstract

Historical ecology is an integrative research framework that merges Earth sciences with the social sciences and humanities to analyze patterns and processes in the complex and combined human-environment ecosystems of the past. The goal of the Integrated History and Future of People on Earth (IHOPE) project is to utilize this information to improve future management of these complex adaptive systems. This international initiative, operating spatially at global, continental, regional and local scales and temporally from early hominids to the present, relies on the expertise of scientists, scholars, and indigenous/local populations to present a holistic picture of system dynamics and chart sustainable futures for ecosystems and the societies that inhabit them.

Keywords: Complex adaptive systems, urban ecology, ecosystem management, indigenous/local communities, policy makers

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